

## Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

# Texas Dean Eleanor Green: A Hall of Fame Veterinarian

By Dr. Donald F. Smith and Julie Kumble  
October 23, 2013

The byline is straightforward and evocative of their impact:

The Women who *Shape* the West.... Change the World.

So reads the slogan of the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, and one of our own—Dean Eleanor Green from Texas A&M—will be inducted there tomorrow, October 24<sup>th</sup>. The Hall of Fame was established in 1975 to honor women “whose lives exemplify the courage, resilience, and independence that helped shape the American West.”<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Green laughingly, but with great humility, says, “I’ll be right there alongside Annie Oakley and Sandra Day O’Connor.”<sup>2</sup>



*Eleanor M. Green, DVM, DACVIM, DABVP  
Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine  
College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University  
Photo provided by Dr. Green (2013)*

Those who are familiar with Green’s veterinary career recognize her as one of the first woman deans in the country, appointed in 2009 at Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine &

Biomedical Sciences. Before that, she served as the first woman department head and chair of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at the University of Tennessee, and large animal hospital director and hospital chief of staff at the University of Florida.

Dr. Green is a recognized leader in the equine industry. She has owned and shown horses most of her life and has won numerous circuit, state, and national championships and awards. She was the first woman to officiate at a National Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Competition, and has served on boards of various horse industry organizations. A 1973 DVM graduate of Auburn University—only three women graduated in her class—she started her career as partner-owner of a mixed animal practice in Mississippi. When Mississippi State University established its veterinary college in the mid-1970s, she became a founding faculty member and the only woman on its faculty.

Later in her career, and at a time when the equine veterinary profession was still struggling to adapt to the abrupt rise of women in the field, Green was elected the first woman president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners. She was also the first woman president of both the American Association of Veterinary Clinicians and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners.<sup>3</sup>



*Dr. Eleanor M. Green*  
*2013 inductee, National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame*  
Photo provided by Dr. Green (2013)

Dr. Green grew up in Florida, the daughter of a surgeon who was chief of staff at the local hospital. During an interview with Julie Kumble of the Women's Fund of Western

Massachusetts and me during the AVMA meeting last summer,<sup>4</sup> she told us that her father was “very good at what he did, very highly regarded and a good role model” for her. She also talked about her mother: “She was brilliant, but in a time and culture when a career outside the home was not an option for her.”

Though Green confessed to never having a goal of being an administrator *per se*, she had an unrelenting passion for leadership, whether in teaching, clinical work, research, or the organization of the workplace around her. While at the University of Missouri, she was mentored by Dr. Harold Garner in research, and she supplemented his guidance by voraciously reading books on leadership. Also, early in her career she participated in an intensive, two-week case-based leadership program at Harvard University and notes that, “I was the only veterinarian in the group.”<sup>5</sup>

Dean Green acknowledges that, as a profession, we could do a better job at mentorship, and with that comes leadership training. “We enter the profession to be good clinicians, but we need to do more leadership training so young veterinarians can be better prepared to pursue career opportunities and as they find themselves in positions where leadership skills would be important to their impact and success.”<sup>6</sup>

When Green arrived at Mississippi State as a new faculty member in 1976, the dean (Dr. James Miller, who had come from the corporate sector) put her through a rigorous training program that was required of all new faculty. “Before any newly-hired faculty member could go into the classroom, they had to go through an intensive eight-week professional development program. The principles learned were then reinforced throughout my time at Mississippi. Everyone benefitted.”<sup>7</sup>

I’m not sure if Dr. Green learned the importance of personal engagement at home, or at Mississippi, or at Harvard, or if it is just part of her nature. But for all of her magnificent accomplishments, including those yet to be achieved, I also know her as an engaging, warm, and kind person. When I first met her 15 years ago at the University of Florida, she spent several hours showing my family around the university’s large animal hospital in Gainesville, and then treated my barely-teenage son to a personally-guided tour of alligator alley in Paynes Prairie, south of Gainesville.

That’s just how she is, and that also, is leadership.

Dr. Smith thanks Julie Kumble, Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts, with whom I interviewed Dean Green in July 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> [National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Previous inductees. Dean Green will be honored at the 2013 celebration with three other inductees (one posthumously).

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Green is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners.

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<sup>4</sup> Green, Eleanor M., DVM Auburn 1973 (Carl B. Dean of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University). Interview with Julie Kumble (Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts) and Donald Smith (Cornell University). July 16, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

#### KEYWORDS:

Eleanor M. Green  
National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame  
Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences  
University of Tennessee  
University of Florida  
University of Missouri  
National Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Competition  
Auburn University  
Mississippi State University  
American Association of Equine Practitioners  
American Association of Veterinary Clinicians  
American Board of Veterinary Practitioners  
Dr. Harold Garner  
Dr. James Miller  
Women in Veterinary Medicine  
History of Veterinary Medicine

#### TOPIC:

Women in Veterinary Medicine

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

*Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.